

Staying Longer and Spending More

- 10.1 million non-residents traveled to Montana in 2005 spending over \$2.7 billion.
- Average daily expenditures rose from \$120.03 in 2004 to \$143.95 in 2005.
- Average length of stay increased from 3.92 nights in 2001 to 4.55 nights in 2005.

These are just some of the highlights gleaned from the recently released Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR) report. The new expenditure and economic data coupled with the visitor profile comparison of non-resident travelers in 2001 versus 2005 provides a wealth of information on Montana's travelers. Insights from the reports will be highlighted in future Updates but in the meantime the full reports can be accessed on ITRR's web-site at: www.itrr.umt.edu.

2007 Montana Governor's Conference on Tourism & Recreation

Branding, effective Internet marketing, using tourism as a tool for communities to preserve and enhance what they cherish most and planning for Montana's future success with tourism and recreation are some of the topics to be discussed at the 2007 Montana Governor's Conference on Tourism and Recreation scheduled for April 2-3 at Helena's Red Lion Colonial Hotel.

"Montana Quest—Tourism Success" is the theme for the 2007 tourism and recreation industry gathering. Registration materials, exhibitor and sponsor information, preliminary agenda outline and Helena lodging and visitor service information are available on the conference website: www.travelmontana.mt.gov/conference.

Featured presentations at the 2007 conference include:

The Art of Branding—Setting Yourself Apart From the Competition—Roger Brooks, Destination Development, Inc, Olympia, WA (One of the favorite presenters at the 2006 conference in Great Falls).

Past, Present and Future Trends in Online Marketing—Susan Sweeney, the e-Business Expert, Bedford, Nova Scotia.

Civic Tourism—A Tool For Improving Our Community's Quality of Life—Dan Schilling and Mark McDermott, Prescott and Phoenix, AZ.

The next Montana Tourism & Recreation Strategic Plan Process Update and Public Discussion Sessions—Lorraine Roach and the Hingston Roach Group Planning Team.

In addition to the featured presentations, the conference will offer concurrent break out sessions on various topics, Helena field trips, luncheon presentations and a Tuesday night banquet where individuals, organizations, communities and events will be celebrated with the annual tourism awards.

Further details on the conference agenda and special features will appear in future Updates.

Event Grants Available

This is a reminder that Montana communities, organizations and tribal governments sponsoring or planning new annual events have until January 12, 2007 to apply for \$50,000 in state tourism "bed tax" grant funds available from the Montana Department of Commerce, Travel Montana Special Events Grant Program (SEGP).

For more information about the SEGP, or to request an application, contact Travel Montana's Carol Crockett, 406-841-2796. SEGP application materials can be downloaded from Travel Montana's Intranet site: travelmontana.mt.gov.

Feting the Filmmakers

It is film festival season and the Montana Film Office is in full swing marketing Montana's locations, incentives and crew base to filmmakers. The 3rd annual HATCHfest lit up downtown Bozeman October 3-8 and the Film Office was there to host an informational booth and sponsor a production panel in the Innovator's Lounge. The Bozeman festival was also the inaugural run for a new partnership between HATCHfest and the Montana Film Office. The next marketing event for the newly formed alliance will be a Montana presence at the Sundance Film Festival, January 18-28, 2007.

The Montana Film Office sponsored the 2006 AFI Fest Film Festival in Hollywood November 1-12 and co-hosted a reception for filmmakers on November 5 at the AFI Fest Cinema Lounge. Film Office Project Coordinator, John Ansotegui, represented Montana at the festival and marketed to over 100 filmmakers that attended the event. John was able to present Montana's *Big Sky on the Big Screen* film incentive program to the attendees as well as engage the filmmakers one-on-one in regard to upcoming projects that would work well in Montana.

Mining for Business

The National Tour Association Convention held in Salt Lake City, UT this past November saw two changes in Montana's participation that provided a wealth of opportunity for attendees and suppliers alike. First, the 13 Montana suppliers sponsored a refreshment booth for all 3,000 convention attendees, rather than hosting the former invite-only Montana Night Dinner. This sponsorship provided suppliers more access to potential visitors while promoting a Montana mainstay, beef jerky. "The jerky was

a huge hit among attendees," according to Group Tour Manager Marlee Iverson, "and gave a unique flavor to the event." Secondly, tour operators were invited to join Montana suppliers for a mini-mining opportunity, courtesy of the Sapphire Gallery of Philipsburg. The mining experience gave the Montana suppliers another occasion to visit with operators and discuss the diversity of Big Sky Country's attractions and activities. "Everyone went home a winner" according to Marlee. "The food was distinctive, the mining offered a unique Montana experience and the one-on-one conversation provided a wealth of opportunity for Montana operators." One change did not occur—a trip to Montana was given away to a tour operator to come and experience the state first-hand. Tim Patrick of Mayflower Tours went home a very big winner as he won the trip to Montana and a GPS courtesy of the Montana suppliers.

For details on Marlee's appointment notes for NTA go to Travel Montana's Intranet site, www.travelmontana.mt.gov/OURPROGRAMS/USCanGroupTravel.asp or contact her directly at miverson@mt.gov, 406-841-2895.

Welcome! Välkommen!

Travel Montana would like to introduce two new staff members, Carmen Levick and

Torbjorn (Tobie) Ohlin. Carmen is Betsy Baumgart's new Administrative Assistant, while Tobie is the new guru of computer networks (i.e. the Network Administrator) for Travel Montana.

While new to Travel Montana, Carmen is not new to state work as she spent two years with the Business and Income Tax Division at the Montana Department of Revenue. She is excited to be home, having grown up in Anaconda, before traveling east to Virginia for employment.

Tobie, a native of Sweden, moved to Montana in February 2006, where he began work in the computer industry and continues spreading his knowledge across Montana, assisting staff and Montana Visitor Information Centers with computer issues. However, Tobie is not new to Montana. According to Tobie, he and his wife spent many years traveling to Montana "being tourists" and fell in love with the Big Sky Country.

Both Carmen and Tobie are excited about the new changes in their lives and the opportunities for outdoor recreation that abound throughout Montana's winter and warm seasons.

And speaking of being excited about new changes, our very-own Marketing Assistant Susan Albrecht was recently married so she now goes by Susan Buhr. Congratulations Susan and we're happy to have you on board Carmen and Tobie.

Superhost Survey

If you are a Montana tourism and recreation business, organization, or agency listed in Travel Montana's publications and websites, you should have received a November email asking you to respond to a web-based



Montana Superhost training needs survey. Responses to this survey are being used by Montana Superhost to adjust their customer service training curriculum, promotions and packaging to better service the staff training needs of Montana's tourism and recreation partners. If you have filled out the survey, thanks! If you have not responded yet, please do. If you did not receive the survey email, but would like to, contact Travel Montana's Victor Bjornberg, vbjornberg@mt.gov. If you want to schedule a Montana Superhost Training Seminar, contact Jodi Smith or Ben Traina at 406-756-3374, FAX: 406-756-3351, superhost@fvcc.edu.

Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided to disabled persons on request.

Calendar of Events:

Happy Holidays & Happy New Year to our friends and colleagues in the travel industry.

December

25 MPD Offices closed

January

1 MPD Offices closed

12 SEGP Applications due

18-28 Sundance Film Festival

For all of the latest Montana tourism industry information log on to:
travelmontana.mt.gov

The Big E-vent



In doing our part to help save the planet, the monthly Travel Montana/Montana Film Office Update will no longer be mailed out in hard-copy. Starting in January 2007, look for the Update in your email Inbox instead. **If you haven't done so already, please be sure to send us your updated email address along with your name and business name to:**

TMUpdate@visitmt.com

MONTANA

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